



MaineDOT Flash Facts

Topic: Aggressive Driving and Road Rage

One third of the state's crashes are caused by aggressive driving. Almost half of car crash deaths and serious injuries are caused by aggressive driving. In 2005, Maine experienced nearly 12,000 aggressive driving crashes that resulted in 91 deaths, and nearly 6,000 injuries.

It is risky driving behavior that includes actions such as:

- Speeding
- disregarding traffic signs or signals;
- tailgating;
- unsafe passing
- and weaving in and out of traffic

It's taking chances on the road-endangering you and others.

The percent of Maine crashes related to Aggressive Driving crashes has been steadily increasing in recent years.

Most of us don't think of ourselves as aggressive drivers, but do you ever have any of these dangerous driving styles?

- Drive close to the rear of the car ahead
- Travel at speeds higher than the posted limit
- Pass in locations where the view ahead is limited
- Find that your emotions work their way to the accelerator pedal
- Take chances at stop signs and traffic signals
- Show your anger to another driver through aggressive driving behaviors (such as those noted above)

Some of these behaviors may be so integrated into your driving style that you don't even realize it - but you may get comments from your passengers. Take those



comments as a friendly warning and take the edge off any poor driving habits. It will make travel calmer and safer for you and others on the road.

The MaineDOT reminds you to:

- Travel at a safe speed
- Allow yourself plenty of time to get to your destination. This will reduce your urge to take unsafe chances
- A little courtesy goes a long way to keep your stress levels down and other road users emotions calm
- Leave enough following distance between yourself and the vehicle ahead of you.

Crashes related to aggressive driving are frequent and serious, so, ***Be A Road Model*** and avoid risky behaviors.

Over the past 10 years, crashes involving aggressive driving have gone up 20%. Aggressive driving is sometimes related to road rage. Road rage is uncontrolled anger that leads to intentional violence or threats on the roadway. It is often caused by factors such as stress, a busy schedule and taking other's actions too seriously.

Typical Aggressive Driving Behaviors (Maine crashes during the past 3 years):

- Illegal or Unsafe Speed is the number one problem. Nearly 19,000 crashes involving excessive speed, resulting in 224 fatalities (40% of the state crash fatalities) and over 10,000 injuries (over 20% of the total injuries)
- Following Too Closely (10,000 crashes, 4 Fatalities, and nearly 5,000 Injuries)
- Disregard of Traffic Control Devices (3,000 crashes, 20 Fatalities and 2,100 injuries)
- Improper or Unsafe Lane Change (2,400 crashes, 7 Fatalities and 700 injuries)
- Improper Passing (2,300 crashes, 24 Fatalities and 800 injuries)

Is aggressive driving intentional?

Sometimes. (But it never should be)
Often it is a result of:

- Poor scheduling (Results in excessive speed and other risk taking activities on the road.)
- Emotional reaction to personal issues or actions of other drivers
- Alcohol and drugs (Leading to additional risk-taking.)
- Inexperience (taking unnecessary chances)

This information is provided by MaineDOT, for further safety information contact 207-624-3278



Here are some suggestions from the MaineDOT to avoid road rage:

- Remember the human side of driving - the people driving other vehicles have family, friends and busy schedules to follow, just like you
 - Be substance free - your emotions can be impaired by drug or alcohol use
 - Recognize that everybody makes mistakes on the road. Don't take those errors personally
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Driving isn't just about you- it's a cooperative activity between you and other drivers on the road. We can all help to prevent acts of road rage by using a few simple rules.

Avoid Aggressive Driving:

Anticipate the actions of other road users. One unexpected move into your path by another vehicle, pedestrian or bicyclist can be devastating-so don't let aggressive driving endanger you or others.

- Travel at a safe speed
- Use turn signals
- Leave adequate following distance
- Avoid abrupt turns and stops
- Stay with the traffic flow
- Allow plenty of time to reach your destination--safe and relaxed

Driving sometimes is viewed as an individual task. Make driving a positive social activity.

Remember:

- People driving the other vehicles have families and loved ones, just like you
- Driving is a cooperative activity between you and other motorists
- Other drivers may seem personally detached from you (since they are inside another vehicle) but treat them as you would in a more personal setting

Whenever you travel, you may observe other drivers exhibiting road rage. According to the MaineDOT there are a few things you can do to prevent road rage events:

- Do not overreact to other driver's poor decisions
- Avoid making eye contact with drivers who look angry
- If you witness road rage, have a passenger telephone authorities or pull off to a safe place and call 9-1-1 yourself

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Be a Road Model: drive safely and courteously for yourself and for others on the road... and always wear your seatbelt.